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ABSTRACT

Public anger is a typical reaction to governments' or companies' attempts to cover up mistakes, conceal evidence of risks, make misleading statements, or lie. Many times, this anger leads to an entrenched resistance to public or private initiatives. Ways in which this resistance can be overcome by a mutual gains approach, which involves face-to-face negotiations, are described in this book. It outlines six key elements--encourage the other side's concerns, encourage joint fact finding, offer contingent commitments to minimize impacts, accept responsibility, act in a trustworthy fashion at all times, and focus on building long-term relationships. The book describes how these elements can help business and government leaders negotiate, rather than fight, with their critics. It shows how to identify who the public is, whose concerns to address first, which people and organizations must be convinced of the legitimacy of action taken, and how to assess and respond to different types of anger effectively. To illustrate this approach, dozens of both private-sector and public-sector cases, as well as crisis scenarios such as the accident at Three Mile Island, are explored. The chapters are: (1) "Introduction"; (2) "Why Is the Public Angry?"; (3) "The Mutual Gains Approach"; (4) "Accidents Will Happen"; (5) "Risky Business"; (6) "When Values Collide"; (7) "The Media"; and (8) "Principled Leadership." (Contains an index and around 220 references.) (RJM)

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